

THE PEACE RIVER REGION SUBDIVISION MONITORING PROGRAM

**A REPORT TO THE REGIONAL
PLANNING DIRECTORS OF ALBERTA**



prepared by: peace river
regional planning commission

MARCH 1982

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In September of 1980 the Peace River Regional Planning Commission initiated the Subdivision Monitoring Program. It is an ongoing project which involves collection, coding and computer processing of data from subdivision applications. The resulting data bank can be used to produce a variety of statistics, comparisons and cross-tabulations. The project has almost reached the stage where all subdivision files from 1978 to the end of 1981 have been processed and are available for statistical analysis.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the project. It is divided into 3 parts. Part 1 is this introduction. Part 2 describes the project and includes the history, methodology, manpower requirements, size and utility of the project. It also refers to the liaison and cooperation with staff from Central Services Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs. Part 3 includes a sample data card and the Coded Information List which shows the type of information being collected from each subdivision application and the codes being used.

If you wish to discuss this project further please contact Mr. Joseph A. Calenda, Senior Regional Planner, Peace River Regional Planning Commission at 1-403-532-0988. If you wish to discuss the project with the provincial staff who have been involved in providing computer services please contact Ms. Delphine Abrahamse or Mr. Stephen Toy, Central Services, Alberta Municipal Affairs, 1-403-427-4867.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 History

This project was started in September of 1980 as a result of an earlier request by Commission Members from some of the Improvement Districts in this Region. It was their suspicion that the Subdivision and Development Committee was constantly refusing subdivision applications in the Improvement Districts in spite of recommendations for approval from the Advisory Councils.

In order to resolve the question Commission staff reviewed subdivision applications in the Improvement Districts for 1979. They compared the Advisory Council recommendations with the Subdivision and Development Committee decisions. They also reviewed the decision of the Alberta Planning Board on appeals from the decision of the Subdivision and Development Committee. The results indicated that the refusal rate by the Commission was lower than the Advisory Councils had suspected. The results also indicated that the Alberta Planning Board, on appeals, ruled in favour of the Commission more often than not.

Subsequent to this experience it was decided that subdivision applications throughout the region should be reviewed. Contact was made with Alberta Municipal Affairs to discuss the possibility of computerizing the data. The County of Grande Prairie was used as a test area. A data card and Coded Information List were prepared and data collected.

After the pilot project was completed computer generated statistics were prepared and reviewed. It was decided that the project should be expanded to include the entire region.

The present scope of the project is to review all subdivision applications from January of 1978 to December 31 of 1981 and to continue with new applications as they occur. The 1978-1981 sample is almost complete except for 80 subdivision applications.

2.2 Methodology

The methodology requires the researcher to do a file search and collect and code those pieces of information specified in the Coded Information List. This is done on a data card; one card for each subdivision application. The cards are sent to Central Services in batches of 50 for processing. Once the sample is complete, Central Services will be able to produce computer printout reports which compare any of the variables in the data bank.

There are 31 information categories on the data card including:

- File Number
- Municipality
- Location Code
- Year of Application
- Type of Subdivision
- Area of subjects lands, number of lots and area of lots
- Canada Land Inventory of subject lands

- Rural Farmland Assessment for subject lands and parcel to be subdivided (when available)
- Departmental Comments
- Municipality recommendation and rationale
- Staff recommendation and rationale
- Director approved subdivision
- Subdivision Approval Authority decision and rationale
- Appeal and appeal rationale.

(See Part 3 for a sample data card and the Coded Information List).

The project has two research phases; an historical research phase and a current or maintenance research phase. The historical phase has required the review of subdivision application files from January 1978 to December 1980. The maintenance phase includes current files from 1981 and now from 1982 onwards.

2.3 Manpower Requirements

Manpower expenditures to date have been as follows:

- Senior Planner
 - project design, training of research staff, liaison with computer staff in Edmonton, supervision and report preparation.
 - 120 man hours from September 1980 to March 26, 1982.
- Research Assistant
 - has been used on a part time basis to complete the historical data base.
 - 142 man hours from February 1, 1982 to March 26, 1982.
- Student Planners
 - three student planners have been used on a part time basis to collect and code the historical data.
 - 466 man hours from September 1980 to December 18, 1981.
- Planning Technicians
 - two Planning Technicians in the Current Planning Section have been used part time to complete data cards as new subdivision files are opened (maintenance phase).
 - 92 man hours from January 1, 1981 to Dember 31, 1981.

Total manpower expenditures from September 1980 to March 25, 1982 have been 820 hours.

Estimated future manpower requirements are as follows:

- Senior Planner
 - supervision, maintaining liaison with computer staff in Edmonton, statistics analysis and report writing.
 - 40 man hours per year.
- Research Assistant
 - to complete historical data base.
 - 15 man hours.
- Planning Technician
 - to maintain current data base.
 - 100 man hours per year.

The total annual manpower requirement after the historical data base is complete will be 140 man hours.

2.4 Project Size

The data base includes all subdivision applications from January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1981 and will include new applications from January 1982 onward as they are available.

● Number of Subdivision Applications from January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1981	2,054
● Subdivision Applications in 1978	372
● Subdivision Applications in 1979	530
● Subdivision Applications in 1980	599
● Subdivision Applications in 1981	553
● Number of data cards collected	1,974
● Number of data cards remaining to be collected	80
● Number of data cards processed by computer	1,793
● Number of data cards remaining to be processed	261

The data base is almost complete. Estimates indicate that all cards will be completed and processed by the end of April 1982. At that time statistics can be generated for subdivision activity throughout the region.

2.5 Uses for the Data Base

The greatest utility of the data base lies in the ability of the computer program to generate a broad range of statistics and comparisons between variables, among combined variables or between/among parts of the region.

Some of the uses to the Commission are as follows:

1. To monitor subdivision activity in the region or parts of it. For example a print out can be produced for each municipality in the region indicating the following subdivision activity during 1981:
 - Number of subdivisions,
 - Type of subdivisions,
 - Quantity of land used for subdivision, and
 - Canada Land Inventory and Rural Farmland Assessment rating.

2. To monitor growth and change in urban and rural areas which can lead to review and/or amendment of regional plan policy. For example historical comparisons of subdivision activity can indicate growth trends and/or changes to perceived growth trends.
3. To respond to information requests from municipal councils and the public. For example, Peace River may wish to know how their subdivision activity compares with Grande Prairie's.
4. To resolve disputes or concerns related to subdivisions, the performance of the Subdivision Approving Authority and the Alberta Planning Board. Reference has already been made to this potential use of the data base. See History (2.1).
5. To test policy validity and effectiveness. For example, the Commission has a new agricultural preservation policy which came into effect June 22, 1981. This is substantially different from policy in the Preliminary Regional Plan in effect prior to the new policy. Comparisons of subdivision activity by location, soil type and type of subdivision can be made before and after June 22, 1981 to test the impact of the new policy.
6. To encourage all actors in the subdivision process to become more aware of why they make the recommendations they do. This applies in particular to the municipalities, planning staff and the Subdivision and Development Committee. The data card requires the recording of a rationale for decisions or recommendations of each of these actors. This may encourage them to explain their rationale, thereby becoming more aware of why they take certain actions. This may generate more conscientious and consistent decisions and recommendations. It also allows others to see and better understand the rationale for decisions and recommendations.
7. To test staff effectiveness in supporting their recommendations before the Subdivision and Development Committee. This can be tested by comparing staff recommendations to decisions taken by the Subdivision and Development Committee.
8. To test Commission effectiveness in acquiring favourable decisions from the Alberta Planning Board on appeals. This can be tested by comparing appeal decisions with Subdivision and Development Committee decisions.
9. To prepare annual reports. This will be the first year that the Current Planning Section will prepare its annual report from computer generated statistics for 1981.

All of these tasks can be accomplished without a computer. However, it would require extensive file searching and manual calculations. Computer access permits speedy and accurate recovery of data and generation of statistics. Over time this will prove to be a cost effective method. The expenditures of time in developing and maintaining the system will more than pay for itself.

2.6 Regional - Provincial Cooperation

Keypunching, program design, editing and computer generated statistics have all been provided, free of charge, by the Central Services Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs. The service has been continuous, on request, since the project began. It appears that the service will continue unless the department establishes other work priorities.

In return, Central Services will be using the Region's data base to test a computerized mapping system. This will plot subdivisions at the quarter section level. This project may lead to a standardized, province-wide subdivision monitoring system - perhaps along the same lines as the Standardized Municipal Census being promoted by Alberta Bureau of Statistics.

3.0 DATA CARD AND CODED INFORMATION LIST

The enclosed data card is the one currently being used in this project. It has undergone a number of minor changes as inadequacies in the original design were discovered.

The Coded Information List is the manual used by the researcher when filling out the data card. It includes every possible response for each piece of information required on the data card as well as the codes. It also includes a series of rules governing interpretation to encourage consistent reporting from different researchers. A municipalities code list provided by the Province is also included. There is a 4 digit code for all municipalities in Alberta although the enclosed list only includes municipalities in this region.

PRRPC

SUBDIVISION MONITORING PROGRAM CODING FORM AMENDED JANUARY 18, 1982

FORM NUMBER				CARD		FILE NUMBER					APP. TYPE		MUN.			
				1												
1 4				5		6 11					12		13 16			
DIRECTION		PART		SECTION		TOWNSHIP			RANGE		M		YEAR			
17		18		19 20		21 23			24 25		26		27			
SUB. TYPE		AREA						NO. OF LOTS			LOT AREA					
28 29		30 35						36 38			39 44					
REMNANT SIZE				GENERAL CLI.				RFA SUBJECT				RFA PARCEL				
45 50				51 53				54 57				58 59				
DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS																
60 63				64 67				68 71				72 75				

CARD															
2															
5															
DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS CONTINUED															
6 9				10 13				14 17				18 21			
MUN. RESPONSE				MUNICIPALITY RATIONALE											
22 23				24 28											
STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS DIRECTOR APPROVED															
29 30		31 32		33 34		35 36		37 38		39 40		41			
S.A.A. DECISION				SUBDIVISION AUTHORITY RATIONALE											
42 44				45 46		47 48		49 50		51 52		53 54			
APPEAL				APPEAL RATIONALE											
55 57				58 61											

CODED INFORMATION LIST
(REVISED MARCH 9, 1982)

(REFER TO
ATTACHED DATA
CARD)
Card 1
Position 12

(i)

APPLICATION CODE

Type	Code
1. Initial Application	1
2. Re-application	2

13 - 16

(i)(a)

MUNICIPAL CODE

This is a 4 digit code which identifies the municipality in which the subdivision occurs. The code, which is also used by Municipal Affairs, is attached.

(i)(b)

LOCATION CODE

The legal description is to be coded and placed on the data card.

Direction-17

Direction Code: NE - 1

Partial Section Code:

Partial

Section-18

NW - 2

Less than 1/4 Section - 1

E - 3

1/4 Section - 2

S - 4

1/2 Section - 3

SE - 5

Complete Section - 4

SW - 6

N - 7

W - 8

River Lot - 9: More than one section on a river lot - Code it 00.

Samples: 1. NE 1/4-3-71-6-6

Section 19, 20
Twp. 21, 22, 23
Range 24, 25
Median 26

Northeast quarter of section 3 of township 71, range 6, west of the 6th meridian.

Coded: 1-2-03-071-06-6

2. 31-74-12-6

Coded: 4-31-074-12-6

(no direction when dealing
with whole numbers)

3. E 1/2-1-70-1-6

Coded: 3-3-01-70-01-6

NOTE:

The section must be translated to a 2 digit number since there are 2 positions on the data card. There are 36 sections per township. The townships will range from 69 to 126. The ranges will range from 1 to 13 hence the need to translate range 6 and 1 to a 2 digit number. All sections are west of the 6th meridian hence only one number.

(ii) YEAR OF APPLICATION

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Code</u>
27	1978	1
	1979	2
	1980	3
	1981	4
	1982	5

(iii) TYPE OF SUBDIVISION

	<u>Type</u>	<u>Code</u>
28, 29	1. Country Residential	01
	2. Multi-parcel Country Residential*	02
	3. Farmstead	03
	4. Public Use	04
	5. Hamlet Residential	05
	6. Agriculture	06
	7. Intensive Agriculture (Feedlot)	07
	8. Mutual Parcel Exchange (See Interpretation 7)	08
	9. Urban Single Family	09
	10. Urban Multi-Family	10
	11. Mobile Home	11
	12. Highway Commercial	12
	13. Commercial	13
	14. Industrial	14
	15. Recreational	15
	16. Institutional (See Interpretation 5)	16
	17. Boundary Adjustment	17
	18. Separation of Title	18
	19. Reserve	19
	20. Public Utility Lot	20
	21. Sanitary Land Fill or Sewage Lagoon	21
	22. Natural Severance Country Residential	22
	23. Natural Severance Intensive Agriculture	23
	* Multi-parcel means 2 or more C/R lots.	

(iv) PARCEL DATA

There are 4 pieces of information in this section including:

- 30 - 35 1. Area of subject lands - 4 digits and rounded to nearest whole acre unless value is less than one in which case round to 1 decimal place. (maximum will probably be 160 acres).
- 36 - 38 2. Number of lots proposed including remnant parcel - 3 digits. (In case of boundary adjustment number of lots is 1).

39 - 44

3. Lot Areas of the new parcel(s) to be created - 3 digits rounded to the nearest whole acre unless value is less than one in which case round to 1 decimal place.

45 - 50

4. Size of remnant parcel - 4 digits rounded to nearest whole acre unless value is less than one, etc.

In the case where more than one new parcel is being created the total area of all new parcels being created should be included. For statistical purposes this sum will be divided by the number of lots proposed minus 1 for an average new parcel size.

(v)

CANADA LAND INVENTORY RATING

51 - 53

One piece of information is required; the C.L.I. for the entire subject lands. The data card has room for up to 3 classes of land for the entire subject lands. If there are less than 3 classes the remaining spaces in the section are to be left blank.

<u>C.L.I. Class</u>	<u>Code</u>
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
0	8
Not Available	9

(vi)

RURAL FARMLAND ASSESSMENT RATING

54 - 57

58 - 59

Two pieces of information are required; the R.F.A. for the subject lands and the R.F.A. for the parcel(s) to be subdivided out. Each data category is to be filled from left to right using as many blocks as required. The remaining blocks are to be left blank.

<u>R.F.A.</u>	<u>Code</u>
1. 41%+	1
2. 34-40%	2
3. 29-34%	3
4. 0 -28%	4
5. pasture	5
6. woodlands, ravines, non-assessed lands	6
7. urban	7
8. rural non-farm	8
9. R.F.A. not available	9

NOTE: subject lands refers to the parcels to be subdivided out plus the remnant parcel.

(vii) DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS

There are 3 pieces of information required in this section. The first is identification of the agency circulated, the second is the identification of which agencies responded (Yes/No) and the third is the nature of the response.

	1. Agencies which might be circulated	Code
60 - 63	School Authorities	01
64 - 67	Health Unit	02
68 - 71	District Agriculturalist	03
72 - 75	Environment	04
	Transportation	05
	Energy and Natural Resources	06
	Alberta Government Telephones	07
	Alberta Power	08
	Northwestern Utilities	09
	Gas Co-op	10
	Northern Alberta Railway	11
	Recreation, Parks and Wildlife	12
	Tourism and Small Business	13
	Alberta Labour	14
	Adjacent Municipalities	15
Card 2	2. Response Record	
6 - 9	Response received	1
10 - 13	Response not received	2
14 - 17	3. Type of Response	
18 - 21	Response implies approval (encouragement)	1
	Response implies conditional approval	2
	Response is non-committal	3
	Response implies refusal (discouragement)	4

(viii) MUNICIPALITY RESPONSE

This refers to the response of the local authority within whose jurisdictional boundaries the subject lands fall. There are two pieces of information required including the nature of the response and the rationale for the response.

1. Nature of the response - 5 possibilities

22 - 23

Response	Code
- No response	1
- Recommend approval	2
- Recommend conditional approval	3
- Recommend approval subject to waiver	4
- Recommend refusal	5

Maximum number of possible responses per combination is 2.

2. Rationale for the Response - 8 possibilities

24 - 28

Rationale	Code
- Policy 1 of Regional Plan	1
- Other policies in Regional Plan	2
- Subdivision Regulations	3
- Planning Act	4
- Conditions indigenous to the site	5
- No rationale given/conditions only	6
- No rationale available	7
- Local Planning Documents	8
- Other	9

It is possible to have up to a maximum of 5 rationales in combination as provided for on the data card.

(ix) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This refers to the recommendation of the staff to the Subdivision Approving Authority. Two pieces of data are required; the recommendation and the rationale for the recommendation.

29 - 30

1. Recommendations - 4 possibilities with a maximum of 2 possibilities per combination.

- Recommend approval	1
- Recommend conditional approval	2
- Recommend approval subject to waiver	3
- Recommend refusal	4
- No recommendation, application withdrawn by applicant	5
- No recommendation available	6

2. Rationale - one or any of the following with a probable maximum of 8 rationales per combination.

	<u>Rationale</u>	<u>Code</u>
31 - 40	- Policy 1 of the Regional Plan	01
	- Other policies in the Regional Plan	02
	- Subdivision Regulations (most common regulations to be identified and coded)	03,04,05,06,07 08,09,10,11,12
	- Planning Act (sections to be identified and coded)	13,14,15,16 17,18,19,20
	- Condition indigenous to the site	21
	- No rationale given/conditions only	22
	- No rationale available	23

41 (x) DIRECTORS APPROVAL (See interpretation 8)

Yes 1

(xi) SUBDIVISION APPROVING AUTHORITY

Two pieces of data are required; the decision and the rationale for the decision.

1. Decision Code

- Approval 1
- Condition approval (See interpretation 1) 2
- Approval subject to waiver 3
- Refusal 4
- Forced refusal due to denied waiver 5
- No decision - application withdrawn by applicant 6
- Deemed refusal 7
- Other 8

45 - 54

2. Rationale Code

- Policy 1 of the Regional Plan 01
- Other policies in the Regional Plan 02
- Subdivision Regulations (most common regulations to be identified and coded) 03,04,05,06,07
08,09,10,11,12
- Planning Act (sections to be identified and coded) 13,14,15,16
17,18,19,20
- Conditions indigenous to the site 21
- No rationale given/conditions only (See interpretation 6) 22
- No rationale available. 23

NOTE: If there is a case of Forced Refusal following conditional approval and/or approval subject to waiver, determination of rationale should be based on reasons for conditional approval and/or approval subject to waiver.

(xii) APPEAL TO THE ALBERTA PLANNING BOARD

This refers to appeal of decision from the Subdivision Approving Authority to the Alberta Planning Board. Four pieces of information are required; indication that an appeal was lodged, basis of the appeal, decision of the Board and rationale for that decision.

55	1. Appeal Lodged	
	- Yes	1
	- No	2
56	2. Basis of the Appeal Lodged	
	- Appeal decision of S.A.A.(landowner appeal)	1
	- Appeal conditions of approval	2
	- Appeal by adjacent landowner	3
57	3. Decision of the Board	
	- Appeal Upheld	1
	- Appeal Upheld with Conditions	2
	- Appeal Refused	3
	- No decision - appeal withdrawn or abandoned	4
58 - 61	4. Rationale	
	- Section 105(2)(a) of the Act	1
	- Regional Plan Policies	2
	- Subdivision Regulations	3
	- Conditions Indigenous to the Site	4
	- Other	5
	- No rationale given	6

NOTE: Conditions indigenous to the site include such factors as topography, water or any attributes of the site not specifically quoted in terms of the Act or the Subdivision Regulations.

(xiii) RULES GOVERNING INTERPRETATION

In the case where interpretation of data is at the discretion of the researcher he/she shall make an interpretation, note the interpretation taken and take consistent interpretations in identical circumstances. The following interpretations have been adopted thus far.

1. Interpretation respecting payment of taxes as a condition of approval

Payment of taxes tends to be a most common or standard condition of approval. As such it does not represent "conditional approval". It represents approval. Conditional approval refers to applications where servicing considerations, road dedications, lot boundary changes etcetra are imposed as conditions.

Payment of taxes is not to be interpreted as a rationale for a decision unless it is presented such that no suitable arrangement for payment of taxes can be achieved therefore the subdivision must be refused pursuant to Section 88(1)(d) of the Act.

2. Reading of data cards

Data is to be read from the left to the right in each information category.

3. Blanks on data cards

Blanks appearing in information categories on data cards represents no information available or applicable. It does not indicate missing information.

4. Filler Codes "0"

Use is to be discouraged. They are inappropriate except for when expressing a numerical value having less digits than information space available. In this case zero(s) are to be placed to the left of the numerical value.

Example: Lot Area - 20 acres, expressed as 020

5. For historical sites such as churches, cemeteries, etc. the subdivision type shall be coded as institutional.
6. In the case of S.A.A. rationale - when no rationale is given it means approved because the proposal conforms to the Regional Plan.
7. Mutual Parcel Exchange refers to those situations where two landowners agree to exchange severed parcels off their adjacent quarters to make their quarters unsevered.
8. Director's approval applies to those subdivisions which have less than one half acre in title, phases conform to an Outline Plan, is a Separation of Title or is a boundary adjustment.

MUNICIPALITIES CODE:

BEAVERLODGE -----	T051
BERWYN -----	V063
DONNELLY -----	V255
EAGLESHAM -----	V267
FAIRVIEW -----	T309
FALHER -----	T315
FOX CREEK -----	T342
GIROUXVILLE -----	V366
CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE -----	K035
COUNTY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE #1 ----	C001
GRIMSHAW -----	T405
HIGH LEVEL -----	T435
HIGH PRAIRIE -----	T438
HINES CREEK -----	V447
HYTHE -----	V468
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #16 -----	L016
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #17 -----	L017
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #19 -----	L019
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #20 -----	L020
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #21 -----	L021
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #22 -----	L022
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #23 -----	L023
MANNING -----	T556
MCLENNAN -----	T574
M.D. OF SMOKY RIVER NO. 130 ----	M130
M.D. OF SPIRIT RIVER NO. 133 ---	M133
M.D. OF PEACE NO. 135 -----	M135
M.D. OF FAIRVIEW NO. 136 -----	M136
NAMPA -----	V619
PEACE RIVER -----	T657
RAINBOW LAKE -----	T690
RYCROFT -----	V729
SEXSMITH -----	T754
SPIRIT RIVER -----	T778
VALLEYVIEW -----	T866
WANHAM -----	V896
WEMBLEY -----	T911